

Texas criminal laws taking effect Sept. 1

Sex-offender registration information which is available to the public used to include only an offender's name and street name. It will now include the offender's numeric address and photograph.

The penalty for failing to comply with sex offender registration requirements was strengthened from what had been a state jail felony across the board for all offenders. After Sept. 1, the punishment for failure to comply with registration will depend on the seriousness of the specific crime for which the sex offender was convicted. For example, if an offender has a single conviction



for a serious felony offense that requires lifetime registration and annual verification with local law enforcement, that offender could be charged with a 3rd degree felony for failure to comply with registration. If an offender has more than one conviction for a serious felony offense that requires lifetime registration and verification with local law enforcement once every 90 days, that offender would be charged with a 2nd degree felony for failure to comply with registration.

- Collection of DNA identification has been expanded to include all offenders who are required to register as sex offenders, and all offenders convicted of aggravated assault, homicide and burglary of a habitation. Offenders incarcerated or convicted in Texas of sex-related offenses have been required since 1996 to give blood samples for DNA profiling and inclusion in the state's CODIS database. (Combined DNA Index System.) CODIS is a DNA profile repository that law enforcement investigators throughout Texas and the nation use to help solve sex crimes, which often are committed by repeat offenders. The CODIS database has helped Texas law enforcement officers crack six unsolved sexual assaults since June 1998.

- A Sex Offender Compliance Unit will be added to the DPS Special Crimes Service to investigate and



apprehend sexually violent offenders. The Special Crimes Service already has a fugitive apprehension unit that targets violent re-offenders.

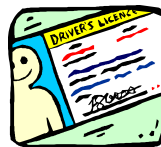
The Special Crimes Service also will electronically monitor certain sex offenders (those subject to civil commitment) who are deemed likely to re-offend and are believed unlikely to respond to traditional mental illness treatment aimed at keeping them from committing additional sex crimes.

- Failure to stop or to report aggravated sexual assault of a child will be a Class A misdemeanor.

- Fence-cutting will be a state-jail felony. (Previously, it was a misdemeanor for minor damage.)

- Operating an amusement ride while intoxicated will carry the same punishment as driving while intoxicated. The blood-alcohol concentration also will be 0.08.

- The unlawful transport of persons (smuggling undocumented workers for hire) will be a state jail felony.



- Identity theft (the fraudulent use or possession of identification, someone's name or date of birth), will be a state jail felony.

- The use of so-called "date-rape" drugs such as rohypnol and GHB to commit a rape will enhance the crime to first-degree felony aggravated sexual assault.

Prepared by the Texas Department of Public Safety's Public Information Office. More info? Call 512-424-2080(512-424-2606 for sound bites)